

## IRREGULAR WARFARE FUNDAMENTALS

Last Updated: 12 July 2016

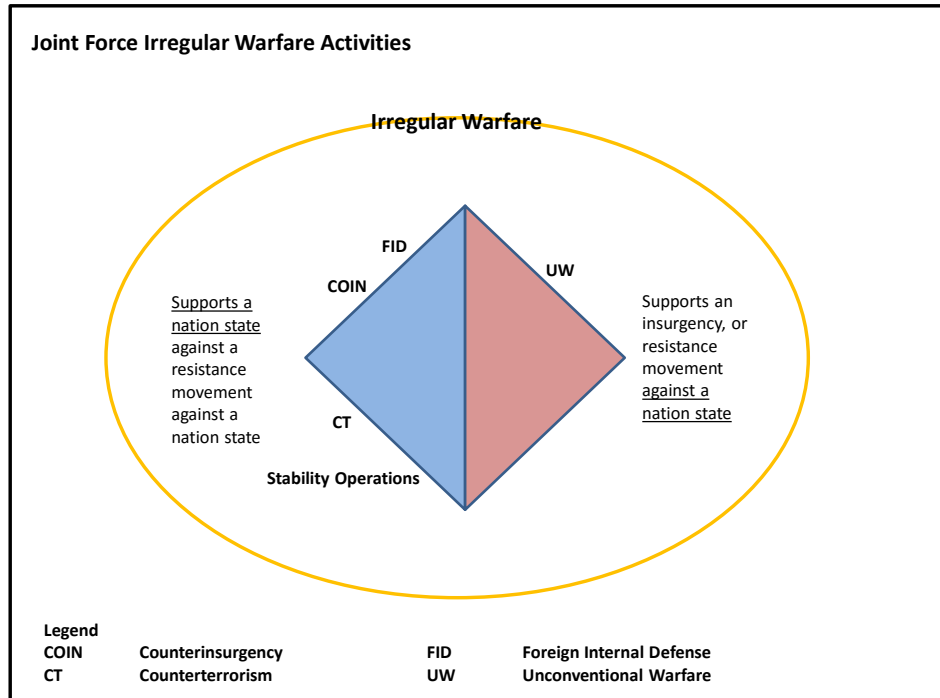
This section defines irregular warfare (IW) and describes the scope of IW operations. It also summarizes the unique challenges of IW.

### Defining IW and Its Unique Challenges

Joint Publication (JP) 1, [\*Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States\*](#), describes IW as “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s).” IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will. The key distinctions between IW and traditional warfare are the context and conduct of the conflict, particularly with regard to the population. Traditional warfare regards the population on the periphery of the conflict, whereas IW considers the population as central to the conflict. Therefore, traditional warfare focuses on coercing an adversary’s key political leaders or defeating an adversary’s military capability. By contrast, IW focuses on an IW partner’s struggle for legitimacy and influence of a relevant population. As a result, IW requires a different level of operational thought and threat comprehension.

This annex is based on the premise that IW is best viewed as a form of warfare that is both different from and complementary to traditional warfare and should not be viewed as a subset form of major operations. Despite this difference, it is important to emphasize that contemporary warfare often combines aspects of both.

The figure, *Joint Force Irregular Warfare Activities*, displays the five recognized IW activities as discussed in DOD policy. Foreign internal defense (FID), counterinsurgency (COIN), counterterrorism (CT), and stability operations are typically conducted in support of a nation state against a resistance movement opposing that state. Unconventional warfare (UW) typically supports an insurgency, or a resistance movement against a state.



## Joint Force Irregular Warfare Activities

### Direct IW Operations

The Department of Defense distinguishes between IW operations and activities conducted by the joint force by, with, and through partner nations (PNs) to address mutual interests with the United States. Each activity requires a scoping of the operation or activity and ensures the proper authorities are delegated.

IW Operations fall under one of the following categories: COIN, CT, FID, stability operations, and UW.

**Counterinsurgency** is defined as “comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes” <sup>1</sup>. The purpose of an insurgency is to overthrow and replace an established government or societal structure, or to compel a change in behavior or policy by the government or societal structure.

COIN operations require commitments of assets and personnel. The United States normally conducts COIN operations when its mutual strategic interests with a PN are at stake, and the PN is incapable of conducting any substantial operations, the situation has deteriorated significantly (approaching a failed state environment), or when there is no effective government in power (i.e., a failed state).

An **insurgency** may extend beyond the borders of a single threatened state. Non-state actors such as transnational terrorist and criminal organizations often represent a security threat beyond areas they inhabit. Some pose a direct concern for the US and

its partners. Non-state actors often team with insurgents to profit from a conflict. Insurgencies can expand to include local, regional, and global entities. This may require the US to employ forces not only to help defeat an insurgency in a single country, but also to defeat small extremist cells operating in other countries or ungoverned areas. The proliferation of [weapons of mass destruction](#) and the ability to affect international commerce give small, non-state organizations potentially disproportionate capabilities.

[Counterterrorism](#) activities and operations are taken to neutralize terrorists and their organizations and networks to render them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals. Successful CT necessitates stable, protracted engagement that leads to familiarization with the operating environments and facilitates security and stability for key populations. It requires a coordinated use of the [instruments of national power](#) to negate the terrorist network's physical or psychological violence and undermine its power, will, credibility, and legitimacy among the population. Security is of the utmost importance. In its absence, terrorist networks are able to exacerbate or exploit a population's grievances and gain influence. For more information see JP 3-26, [Counterterrorism](#).

[Foreign Internal Defense](#) is defined as "participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security."<sup>1</sup> FID is often conducted in conjunction with COIN, CT, special operations, etc., in support of a PN. However, it is not solely a military function. The diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power are keys to successful FID. [Special operations forces](#) and general purpose forces both play critical roles in preparing for and executing FID activities to include assessing, advising, training, assisting, and equipping IW partner forces. For more information, see Annex 3-22, [Foreign Internal Defense](#).

[Stability operations](#) is an "overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the US in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief."<sup>2</sup> For more information, see JP 3-07, [Stability Operations](#).

[Unconventional warfare](#) is defined in JP 1-02, [DOD Dictionary](#), as "activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area." UW operations can be used to exploit a hostile power's political, military, economic, and psychological vulnerability by developing and sustaining indigenous resistance forces to accomplish US and coalition strategic objectives. UW can include a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by, with, and through indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped,

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<sup>1</sup> JP 3-22, [Foreign Internal Defense](#)

<sup>2</sup> JP 3-0, [Joint Operations](#)

supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery.

US Special Operations Command is the lead DOD component for UW, although in some cases general purpose forces support is required. UW operations are usually conducted in enemy-held, enemy-controlled, or politically sensitive territory. For more information see JP 3-05.1, [Unconventional Warfare](#).

## **IW Activities**

Under the umbrella of security assistance programs, the DOD is involved in a variety of activities, as part of the whole of government concept, by, through, and with PNs to build partner capacity and assist with internal defense and development. While this may include things such as education, bilateral agreements, and foreign military sales, the DOD is also prepared to employ joint forces in support of executing security assistance initiatives through joint missions in both combat and non-combat environments. The DOD will also conduct security force assistance (SFA) to provide expertise to support the development of capacity and capability of foreign security forces and other PN governmental institutions.

The US engages with PNs in various activities to support the PN's government legitimacy and help develop internal defense and development strategies to meet both US and PN objectives.

**[Security Sector Assistance \(SSA\)](#)** United States SSA policy is aimed at strengthening the ability of the United States to help allies and PNs build their own security capacity, consistent with the principles of good governance and rule of law. SSA is mandated by Presidential Policy Directive 23, *Security Sector Assistance*. SSA refers to the policies, programs, and activities the US uses to:

- ★ Engage with foreign partners and help shape their policies and actions in the security sector.
- ★ Help foreign partners build and sustain the capacity and effectiveness of legitimate institutions to provide security, safety, and justice for their people.
- ★ Enable foreign partners to contribute to efforts that address common security challenges.
- ★ Build PN's medical capacity and capability to respond and take care of its citizens.

DOD programs should be conducted to achieve four SSA goals:

- ★ Help PNs build sustainable capacity to address common security challenges, to disrupt and defeat transnational threats; sustain legitimate and effective public safety, security, and justice sector institutions; support legitimate self-defense;

contribute to US or partner military operations which may have urgent requirements; maintain control of their territory and jurisdiction waters including air, land, and sea borders; and help indigenous forces assume greater responsibility for operations where US military forces are present.

- ★ Promote partner support for US interests through cooperation on national, regional, and global priorities. Priorities include military access to airspace and basing rights; improved interoperability and training opportunities; cooperation on law enforcement, counterterrorism, counternarcotic, combating organized crime and arms trafficking; countering weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and terrorism; and intelligence, peacekeeping, and humanitarian efforts.
- ★ Promote universal values, such as good governance, transparent and accountable oversight of security forces, rule of law, transparency, accountability, delivery of fair and effective justice, and respect for human rights.
- ★ Strengthen collective security and multinational defense arrangements and organizations, including helping to build the capacity of troop- and police-contributing nations to United Nations and other multilateral peacekeeping missions, as well as through regional exercises, expert exchanges, and coordination of regional intelligence and law enforcement information exchanges.

**Security Cooperation (SC)** is defined in JP 1-02, [DOD Dictionary](#), “all DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to host nations.”

**Security Assistance (SA)** is defined in JP 1-02, [DOD Dictionary](#), as “group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the US provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.” SA fosters interoperability between US forces and our allies. Within applicable legal and policy constraints, Air Force personnel can train and equip friendly foreign forces. The DOD and other government agencies train foreign militaries and law enforcement personnel through several different programs, some funded by accounts within the DOD budget and others by the Department of State-administered foreign aid budget. SA is designed to help selected countries meet their internal defense needs and to promote sustainable development and growth of responsive institutions. The joint force commander should distinguish between personnel assigned to a combatant command performing a train-and-advise mission and military personnel training host nation forces pursuant to authorities under Title 22, United States Code, *Foreign Relations and Intercourse*, and who fall under the authority of the country’s Chief of Mission. Those personnel performing a Title 22 security assistance mission, by law, are restricted from performing duties of a combatant nature. If the military personnel are performing a Title 22 security

assistance mission of a non-combat nature in a host nation with a security environment akin to a combat zone, the Chief of Mission may delegate or defer the responsibility for force protection to the combatant commander. Iraq is an example where there is a mix of Title 22 foreign military sales cases and Title 10 training occurring simultaneously.

Delivery of [foreign military sales](#) items can be performed in conjunction with combined operations and contingencies or with other training programs conducted by the geographic combatant commands. These operations may also be conducted by various departments and agencies of the US government.

**[Security Force Assistance \(SFA\)](#)** is defined as “activities that contribute to unified action by the US Government (USG) to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions.” SFA is conducted to assist PN in their efforts to defend against transnational and internal threats to stability. SFA spans the range of military operations and includes military engagement, security cooperation, crisis response, and contingency operations. It can even be accomplished during major operations and campaigns in support of US national strategic objectives. SFA should be closely coordinated with relevant USG agencies. FID and SFA are similar at the tactical level where advisory skills are applicable to both. At the operational and strategic levels, both FID and SFA focus on preparing foreign security forces (FSF) to combat lawlessness, subversion, insurgency, terrorism, and other internal threats to their security; however, SFA also prepares FSF to defend against external threats and to perform as part of an international force. For more information see JP 3-22, [Foreign Internal Defense](#).

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